

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VALLET 01885 230659Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
ACDA-12 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00 EB-08 FAA-00
CTME-00 STR-07 AID-05 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02
OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DOE-15 SOE-02 /142 W
-----026373 231007Z /10 ,

R 230642Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8271
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE BE
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE LINDSEY AS GER
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 01885

CINCUSAFE LINDSEY FOR INCF
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN FOR INO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, EWWT, PEPR, MT, UR
SUBJECT: RESULTS OF RUSSIAN DELEGATION DISCUSSIONS WITH
- GOM INCONCLUSIVE

REFS: A) VALLETTA 1635 (DTG 061151Z JUN 78) (NOTAL)
- B) VALLETTA 1436 (DTG 251113Z MAY 78) (NOTAL)
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PAGE 02 VALLET 01885 230659Z

1. ACCORDING TO A HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE WHO IS CLOSE TO
PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF, THE DISCUSSIONS HELD BY MINTOFF
WITH THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION WHICH VISITED MALTA (SEE
REF A) DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN JUNE ENDED ON AN INCON-
CLUSIVE NOTE. MINTOFF, AT THE OUTSET OF THE TALKS,
STRESSED TO THE RUSSIANS THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES

WOULD HE ALLOW SOVIET MILITARY VESSELS ACCESS TO THE MALTA DRYDOCKS. HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF USSR ACCEPTANCE OF THIS POINT AND CALLED IT A SINE QUA NON FOR DEVELOPING A SATISFACTORY ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MALTA AND THE SOVIET UNION. MINTOFF THEN OUTLINED MALTA'S VIEWS ON HOW COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD BE IMPROVED. HE ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT SIGNING ANY FORMAL TRADE OR OTHER (I.E. AVIATION AND MARITIME) AGREEMENTS AND THE OPENING OF ANY OFFICES STAFFED WITH SOVIET PERSONNEL, WHETHER RELATED TO AEROFLOT AND SOVINFLLOT ACTIVITIES IN MALTA OR A TRADE MISSION, WOULD BE DEPENDENT UPON SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS IN MEETING MALTA'S EXPECTATIONS. AS THE RUSSIAN DELEGATION WAS APPARENTLY NOT IN A POSITION TO ACCEDE TO ALL OF MINTOFF'S DEMANDS NOTHING DEFINITIVE WAS AGREED TO AND THE DELEGATION RETURNED TO THE SOVIET UNION FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF MALTA'S POSITION. NO FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED.

2. WHILE THIS DELEGATION WAS IN MALTA, THOSE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS HELD TECHNICAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS WITH SEA MALTA AND AGREED TO MEET ALL OF SEA MALTA'S CONDITIONS ON SUCH MATTERS AS ROUTING, SHIPPING RATES, ETC., IN RETURN FOR CONTINUED USE OF GRAND HARBOR. THE RUSSIANS PRESSED, IN THESE DIS-

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PAGE 03 VALLET 01885 230659Z

CUSSIONS, FOR A FORMAL MARITIME AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED AND FOR A SOVINFLLOT OFFICE TO BE OPENED, BUT AS NOTED ABOVE BOTH OF THESE REQUESTS WERE TURNED DOWN. SOVINFLLOT SERVICE WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE UNDER THE TEMPORARY ARRANGEMENTS CURRENTLY IN FORCE.

3. WITH RESPECT TO AEROFLOT SERVICE TO MALTA, THE GOM ALSO REFUSED A SOVIET REQUEST TO SIGN A FORMAL AVIATION AGREEMENT; IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PREVIOUSLY AGREED TO TENTATIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR AEROFLOT SERVICE TO MALTA (REF B) BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER IS NOW DEPENDENT UPON THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A SATISFACTORY OVERALL TRADE AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS AGREEMENT. IN ADDITION, TENTATIVE PLANS TO SEND A TECHNICAL TEAM FROM AEROFLOT TO MALTA TO DISCUSS VARIOUS TYPES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR AIR MALTA HAVE BEEN PUT ASIDE.

4. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE TRADE TALKS AND THE PRIME MINISTER, IN RESPONDING TO AN OPPOSITION QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT, SAID THAT A STATEMENT WOULD BE MADE AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

5. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, MALTESE OFFICIALS ARE VERY SUSPICIOUS OF SOVIET MOTIVES AS THEY WERE TOO ACCOMMODATING IN MEETING TERMS THAT THE SOURCE ASSUMES TO BE CONTRARY TO THEIR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN THE AERO-FLOT AND SOVINFLOT TALKS AND MUST THEREFORE HAVE SOME OTHER OBJECTIVES IN DEVELOPING TRADE RELATIONS WITH MALTA. PRESUMABLY MINTOFF IS AWARE OF THESE SUSPICIONS AND MAY WELL SHARE THEM, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF HIS REPORTED CONCERN THAT A SOVIET PRESENCE IN MALTA COULD BE BEYOND THE CAPACITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT TO MONITOR AND CONTROL.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, WATERWAY ACCESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VALLET01885
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780262-0063
Format: TEL
From: VALLETTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780624/aaaaaumq.tel
Line Count: 126
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 61401782-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 VALLETTA 1635
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2220941
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RESULTS OF RUSSIAN DELEGATION DISCUSSIONS WITH - GOM INCONCLUSIVE
TAGS: EAIR, EWWT, PEPR, MT, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/61401782-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014